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### A thrilling voice

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Writer Ashwin Sanghi with his book Chanakya's Chant Photo: R. Ragu

*Author Ashwin Sanghi says cinematic adaptations help in promotion of the original book*

When it comes to *The Godfather*, it is difficult to judge whether it is Mario Puzo's edgy book that compliments Francis Ford Coppola film starring Marlon Brando and Al Pacino or the way around. Film makers have always found inspiration in popular fiction for their films and the stupendous success of franchises like Harry Potter and Twilight series is a proof of that. Though few Indian fictions has been adapted on the cinematic screen by Hindi film makers in the past, things have changed with the growth in the popular Indian fiction market. Ashwin Sanghi's whose book *Chanakya's Chant* will be adapted in a Hindi film by UTV Motion Pictures is among authors like Chetan Bhagat, Anuja Chauhan, Amish Tripathi whose books are being adapted into films.

Explaining about the eternal conflict between the written word and the cinematic interpretation he says he is not afraid to experiment with the script and the story, if the film is in the right hands. "An author entices the readers with their words and it is painful for them to even lose a sentence. But films and books are two different mediums and should be dealt differently. What works in a book might not work for a film. When I saw *Anna Karenina* on screen I didn't like it at all whereas *The Godfather* was legendary," he adds.

While the author believes that one cannot take liberties with classic characters like Agatha Christie, Sherlock Holmes, but films based on popular fiction definitely increases the reader base. "We can't deny that films have a bigger reach. After the popularity of the *Slumdog Millionaire* a lot of people started reading Vikas Swarup's *Q & A*. From a business sense, films are a good tool increase the number of readers," says the businessman turned author.

Ashutosh Gowariker is believed to have been roped to direct the film. Steering clear from issues on credits, Ashwin says, "There are some things like names which are very sacrosanct and I would not budge on that. But I have already moved on to my next novel and will be involved very little with the script of the film. I will definitely help out whenever required."

Whether in his first book *The Rozabal Line* or *Chanakya's Chant*, his books deals with characters from history and mythology. His love for thrillers is translated on print. He says that the story lines don't change but the characters and props keep changing, therefore many interpretation of history and ancient stories are bound to happen. "It is important to retain the original flavours with a graduated shift in storyline. When working on a period it is the finer details that evoke imagery that helps in cinematic adaptations," he says. Apart from his next novel, the author is also working on a screenplay based on his book *The Rozabal Line*.

His next book will be a fast paced business story spanning across three historical periods – the Mughal, Maratha and

the British. "I want to make sure that my writing leaves the readers by the hook," he says.

### **Film adaptations**

One of the best selling novels of recent years *The Immortals of Meluha* by Amish Tripathi has been picked by Karan Johar's production house Dharma Productions. The announcement has elicited a mixed response from the fans of the Shiva trilogy but many believe that it has the potential to have the cinematic grandeur of the *Lord of the Rings*.

Chetan Bhagat is a favourite among Bollywood film makers. After *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ The Call Centre*, his two other novels the film adaption of *3 Mistakes of My Life* will be directed by Abhishek Kapoor of *Rock On* fame and Vishal Bhardwaj is working on *2 States*.

The filming rights of Anuja Chauhan's chick lit *The Zoya Factor* is bought by Shah Rukh Khan's *Red Chillies Entertainment* but details about the cast and director is not clear.

Deepa Mehta's adaptation of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is one of the most awaited films of 2012. The film boasts of an impressive star cast.

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